

PORT HEALTH DISTRICT OF WORKINGTON.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PORT MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR
THE YEAR 1945, BY ROBERT W. MACPHERSON, M.D., D.P.H.

Members of the Workington Port Health
Committee.

Mr. H. R. Clucas - Chairman.

Mr. C. Baird.
Mr. J. A. Cape.
Mr. J. R. Davis.
Mr. J. Murray.

Mr. J. Poole.
Mr. H. Rule.
Mr. D. Vickers.
Mr. S. Walker.

MR. A. V. CATTRELL

Mr. John R. Cockfield	- Clerk to the Authority.
Dr. R. W. Macpherson (M.D., D.P.H.)	- Port Medical Officer.
Dr. R. E. Fletcher (M.B., Ch.B.)	- Deputy Port Medical Officer.
(On active service since 13/6/42.)	
Dr. T. T. Graham (M.B., Ch.B.)	- Temporary Deputy Port Medical Officer.
Mr. R. James	- Port Health Inspector.
Mr. S. M. Carruthers	- Assistant Port Health Inspector.

(Resigned - October, 1945.)

Town Hall,
Workington.

8th March, 1946.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Workington Port Health Committee.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I present herewith my Annual Report for the year 1945, which has been prepared in accordance with Circular 1937 of the Ministry of Health, dated 11th January, 1940.

1. Amount of shipping entering the Port during the year.

	By the Medical Officer of Health.	By the Sanitary Inspector.	No. re- ported to be defec- tive.	No. of vessels on which defects were remedied.	No. of vessels reported as having infectious disease on board.
Vessels Inspected.	72	311	71	58	2

2. Water Supply.

Details of this service have been previously described. There is a plentiful supply of fresh water to meet all requirements. The supply was chemically and bacteriologically examined during the year and found satisfactory.

3. Port Sanitary Regulations, 1933.

The existing approved arrangements have continued to work smoothly.

During the year two vessels reported suspected infectious diseases during the voyages. The Master of a Norwegian vessel reported a fireman sick. The man was removed to the Isolation Hospital as suspected Diphtheria, but fortunately the diagnosis was not confirmed. The other report was from a Swedish vessel from Algiers. Prior to this vessel arriving telephone communications were received from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of War Transport intimating

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that two men had been taken off the vessel at Gibraltar and had died in hospital with suspected Typhus Fever. In consequence of the seriousness of this infectious disease coupled with the lack of full information, I made provisional arrangements for the strictest precautionary measures to be adopted. The vessel was boarded off the Port and a careful examination made of all crew, bedding, etc. The next day the vessel was allowed to dock in a special berth, and following a further satisfactory examination of the crew I had them moved ashore for twenty-four hours whilst the whole vessel was fumigated with a strong concentration of hydrocyanic acid gas. During this vessel's stay in Port the crew were kept under close supervision, but nothing further occurred. A brief history of the whole occurrence is worth recording. Whilst this Swedish vessel was loading iron ore at Algiers the Master was requested by the Swedish Consul to take two Swedes (aged 22 years and 33 years) from the Local jail to England for ultimate passage to Sweden. The Master visited the jail and found the two men confined in a room approximately twelve feet by fifteen feet, stone floor, no furnishings, with about thirty-five other men of all nationalities, including Arabs. The men were unshaven, in rags, and in an emaciated condition. The Master was reluctant to take the men, but they joined the vessel on the day it sailed, and he understood they had been de-loused before leaving the jail. The men were housed in the after-crew's accommodation along with twelve other men. One slept on a form in the mess room and the other was allotted the only spare bunk. After two days at sea the men complained of sickness, but the Captain was of the opinion that they had overeaten as they had spent most of their time in the galley eating ravenously. Both men were seriously ill when the vessel was off Gibraltar and a doctor was summoned aboard and ordered their removal to Hospital and the vessel sailed the same day direct for Workington.

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On twenty-one other vessels, cases of sickness were reported but upon examination all proved of a non-infectious character, but in eleven instances it was necessary for the patients to be removed to Hospital for treatment.

One Norwegian vessel after discharging cargo at Workington signed a new crew from the Norwegian Merchant Navy Pool at Glasgow. Two days later one of the crew took seriously ill and was removed to the Isolation Hospital suffering from Cerebro-Spinal Fever, where he died a few hours later.

Twenty-three cases of Venereal Diseases were reported and free treatment was recommended. I am pleased to note a decline in the number of cases reported, and this I attribute to the use of sulphonamide drugs and penicillin, as the majority of foreign going vessels have these preparations in their drug chests.

Eight vessels landed twenty-seven passengers from Mediterranean Ports. These were mainly Government personnel and were allowed to proceed to their destinations following satisfactory medical examinations.

During the year two Notices were issued in pursuance of the Parrots (Prohibition of Import) Regulations.

4. Measures against Rodents.

Rats on vessels have become more prevalent during the War years, especially on vessels trading with Mediterranean Ports for any length of time. Strict vigilance has been maintained during the year and all vessels are searched for evidence of rats. Precautionary measures such as rat guards on mooring ropes, trapping and baiting, are carried out when necessary.

Twenty-two Deratisation Certificates were found to have expired, and in ten instances no action was taken as the vessels were proceeding to another home Port for dry-docking and overhaul. Twelve Certificates were issued by your....

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Authority - eight Exemptions and four Deratisations. The four latter vessels were fumigated with hydrocyanic acid gas, and seven, thirty-three, fifty-four, one-hundred and twenty-one rats were killed on the respective ships.

Periodical trapping and baiting has been carried out on the Dock and Harbour, and also on the breakwater extension.

5 Hygiene of crew's spaces.

Vessels entering the Port are regularly inspected and defects or other conditions prejudicial to health are brought to the notice of the Masters for remediable action. During the year the Committee's attention was drawn to the unsatisfactory standard of crew's accommodation, and a communication was forwarded to the Association of Port Health Authorities of the British Isles. The standard of accommodation and cleanliness on many British vessels, particularly of the coasting type, leave much to be desired. During past years much legislation has been introduced for the health, comfort and welfare of the shore community in the form of Housing, Public Health, Shops and Factories Acts, but nothing for the seamen. Foreign vessels (especially Scandanavian) compare much more favourably than our own, and it is still common to find seamen having to eat, sleep, wash and dry wet clothes in the same compartment. The Association of Port Health Authorities are very much alive to the unsatisfactory conditions prevailing, and I am sure everyone would welcome the early introduction of compulsory legislation for vessels to be provided with proper mess-rooms, bath-rooms with hot and cold water, separate sleeping rooms with locker accommodation, clothes drying rooms, etc.

During the year thirty-eight vessels were found to be verminous and disinfestation work was carried out under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector.

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Classification of Nuisances.

Nationality or Vessel.	Number inspected during the year.	Defects of original construc- tion.	Structural defects through wear and tear.	Dirt, ver- min and other con- ditions prejudicial to health.
British	231	-	26	44
Other Nations	80	-	3	6

The carcasses of two porpoises were removed from the foreshore during the year.

In conclusion I wish to record my appreciation to H.M. Customs Officers and Sanitary Inspectors for their willing co-operation; and also to Mr. Hopkins, Pastor to the Seamen's Institute, who has willingly placed the Institute at the disposal of several crews having to spend the night ashore whilst vessels were being fumigated.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

ROBERT W. MACPHERSON, M.D., D.P.H.
Medical Officer to the Authority.

